

Remarks

The various parts of the Office Action (and other matters, if any) are discussed below under appropriate headings.

Election/Restriction

Claims 5 and 7-9 have been withdrawn from consideration as being drawn to a nonelected species. Upon allowance of claim 1, all of the claims are properly includable in this application. Until then, it is noted that new claims 11-15, 18 and 20 read on the elected species.

Drawings

The drawings have been objected to for not showing every feature of the invention specified in the description, as is required by regulation. The Examiner is referring to "Friction material 1" on page 3 of the application. The description should have simply read "Friction material" and appropriate correction has been made in the specification. Withdrawal of the drawing objection is requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102 and § 103

Claims 1-3, 6 and 10 have been rejected as being anticipated by or unpatentable over US 5270690 (Oberg), US RE40324 (Crawford) and/or 6586720 (Hu). Although exception is taken to the art rejections, claim 1 has been amended to further define patentably over the prior art. In addition, editorial changes have been made in claim 1 and in the dependent claims to bring them into line with more conventional U.S. claiming practices.

The rejections advanced by the Examiner are primarily based on Oberg. Oberg discloses a bidimensional input control system including a contact bar 10 that rotates about a longitudinal axis. The contact bar includes a plurality of circumferentially spaced belts 18 that can be slid back and forth in a direction parallel to the longitudinal axis of the contact bar.

Each belt 18 forms a loop having an axis and an oblong cross-sectional shape. The axial length of each belt (the dimension in the direction of the loop's axis) is narrow when compared to the circumferential length of the belt. Consequently, the belt has little need for stiffening across the axial length thereof, especially in view of the support structure provided therefor.

Applicant discloses in his application a pointing device including a belt having a much larger axial length. In order to emphasize this distinction in the claims, claim 1 has been amended to specify that the stiffening strips or equivalent means each has a circumferential width, and the stiffening strips or equivalent means has an axial length greater than the circumferential widths of a plurality of stiffening strips or equivalent means. Support for this amendment can be found in Figure 1, where it can be seen that the stiffening strips 7 have an axial length greater than the circumferential width of two or more of the stiffening strips.

In contrast, Oberg shows pad-like segments or sections that are circumferentially arranged on the belt. As is evident from the various views showing the circumferential width of these segments relative to their circumferential length, in no instance does the axial length exceed the circumferential width of a plurality of the segments. Moreover, any desire to make the strips with a greater axial length is contraindicated as this would render the contact bar much more bulky and presumably less desirable. There simply is no reason for the skilled person to modify the belt of Oberg so as to arrive at the subject matter of claim 1, whether taken alone or in combination with the teachings of the other references.

For at least the foregoing reasons, the rejection of claim 1 should be withdrawn.

The dependent claims recite still further features not found in a combination similar to that claimed. Inasmuch as the dependent claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as the claims from which they depend, the Examiner's comments in respect thereof need not be addressed and this should not be construed to be an acquiescence in the contentions made by the Examiner.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, request is made for timely issuance of a notice of allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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